



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10**

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Seattle, WA 98101-3140

OFFICE OF
ECOSYSTEMS, TRIBAL AND
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

November 18, 2010

Slater R. Turner
District Ranger
3160 NE 3rd Street
Prineville, Oregon 97754

Re: EPA Region 10 Comments on the Mill Creek Allotment Management Plans Final
Environmental Impact Statement. EPA Project Number: 10-006-0AFS

Dear Mr. Turner:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the proposed Mill Creek Allotment Management Plan on the Lookout Mountain Ranger District of the Ochoco National Forest, Crook County, Oregon. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Clean Air Act § 309 require EPA to review and comment in writing on the environmental impacts associated with all major federal actions.

In our comments on the draft EIS in August 2010, EPA expressed environmental concerns related to the range of alternatives, the role of active management in the DEIS, and the proposed streambank alteration standards. We appreciate the care taken by the Forest Service in responding to our comments, as well as the discussion added to Chapter 2, and the modifications to Table 3. The new text in Chapter 2 provides helpful context, and provides the rationale for the range of alternatives analyzed in the DEIS and FEIS. We continue to believe that the decision making process would have been well served by an alternative that sought to further address water temperature, bank instability and riparian condition, but we support the selected alternative (Alternative 2) as it will help move the project area toward desired conditions more quickly than would maintaining current management.

We also recognize the discussion of thresholds for moving cattle on page 28 of the FEIS. We continue to believe that the FEIS could have provided additional clarification about the use of these thresholds in the context of "active management" by the permittee (or the permittees representative), but we are satisfied that these thresholds will be incorporated into the annual operating plans and/or operating instructions, and that mechanisms exist to ensure compliance.

Finally, we recognize the scientific review undertaken by the Regional Technical Team regarding streambank alteration standards. We do not disagree with the adoption of the standards proposed under the FEIS, but we encourage you to coordinate closely with planners for the Blue Mountain Plan Revision, and to share effectiveness monitoring results as they become available.

Again, we appreciate the effort taken by the Forest Service to address our concerns, and we continue to support the management objectives identified within the plans. If you have questions or you would like to discuss the above comments, please contact Teresa Kubo of my staff at (503) 326-2859 or by email at kubo.teresa@epa.gov ..

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Christine B. Reichgott". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "C" and "R".

Christine B. Reichgott, Manager
Environmental Review and Sediment Management Unit